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ABSTRACT

In a case study, a child's acquisition and maintenance of Chinese (as a first language) and English (as a second language) were documented. The child brought to the United States at age 3.5, acquired English in 2 years and was encouraged to maintain his Chinese skills through a family-based education program. For 6 months the boy was given Chinese lessons by his mother and was asked to use Chinese in communication with his parents. It was found that the child code-switched a great deal, primarily producing Cantonese according to English rules but occasionally conforming to Chinese word order with English content words. During the summer months his first-language skills improved, but they decreased after he began English reading and writing instruction in the fall. However, tests of passive vocabulary and communicative competence indicate that he retained good receptive skills in Chinese. Contains 16 references. (Author/MSE)

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Reeducating a Chinese Child in America in the Native Language

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Abstract

Three patterns were observed among children acquiring their first language in a foreign country (Verhoeven & Boeschoten, 1986). In the first pattern, the first language develops more slowly than it would be in a native setting; however, the difference will trail off as the children receive primary language instruction. In the second pattern, the development of the first language may stagnate at an early age and remain in such a state throughout the developmental process. In the third pattern, the initially less-developed first language may undergo an attrition process, resulting in the loss of the primary language.

My son, Dawnis Chow, came with us to the United States in 1985 when he was 3½ and acquired English as his second language in less than two years. Like many other Chinese children coming to America, he was also losing his first language, Cantonese, in the process. As parents, we did not want Dawnis to fall into the second or third patterns described above. In 1987, a family education program was designed to help him, at age 5½, maintain his first language. For six months, Dawnis was given weekly Chinese lessons by the mother and was asked to use Cantonese to communicate with his parents.

In response to the program and the parents' effort in using the home language, Dawnis code-switched a great deal in his speeches. Occasionally, his code-switching pattern conformed to the Cantonese word order and he mainly code-switched to English content words. More often, however, he was producing his Cantonese according to English, his dominant language.

Dawnis improved his first language during the summer when he was away from school, the major second language environment. However, his ability to speak Cantonese receded drastically the following August when he started to learn how to read and write in English in kindergarten. His literacy development and English being the medium for socialization and survival in school explained his reliance on the second language. Tests on his passive vocabulary and communicative competence, however, indicated that he still maintained a good receptive ability in his first language.

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Reeducating a Chinese Child in America in the Native Language

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Introduction

Verhoeven and Boeschoten (1986) propose three patterns for children acquiring their first language in a foreign country. In the first pattern, the first language develops more slowly than it would be in a native setting; however, the difference will trail off as the children receive primary language instruction. In the second pattern, the development of the first language may stagnate at an early age and remain in such a state throughout the developmental process. In the third pattern, the initially less-developed first language may undergo an attrition process, resulting in the loss of the primary language.

My son, Dawnis Chow, came with us to the United States in 1985 when he was 3½ and acquired English as his second language in less than two years. Like many other Chinese children coming to America, he was also losing his first language, Cantonese, in the process. As parents, we did not want Dawnis to fall into the second or third patterns described above. In 1987, a family education program was designed in an effort to help him, at age 5½, maintain his first language. For six months, Dawnis was given weekly Chinese lessons by the mother and was asked to use Cantonese to communicate with his parents. This paper is a case study on his use of the two languages after the introduction of the lessons.

In this paper, *Cantonese* and *Chinese* are used interchangeably to refer to Cantonese, a major dialect spoken in Hong Kong and the southern part of China.

Dawnis's Linguistic Background

Dawnis was born in Hong Kong, where over 90 percent of the population is Cantonese-speaking Chinese. (Hong Kong has been under British rule for over a century, but it is due to return to China in 1997.) A quiet child who spoke fairly little but liked watching cartoons on TV, Dawnis acquired his first language, Cantonese, when he was about 1½ years old. His favorite program was "the Smurfs," which was vividly translated into Cantonese and shown every morning. Prior to starting nursery school at age 3, he had learned a few simple Chinese characters, numbers, and parts of the alphabet at home. Although one of the shyest boys in class, he did fine in his first school. However, the parents switched him to an all English-speaking school shortly afterwards in preparation for his coming to the States. It was not a totally positive experience for him because of the sudden change of school. Nonetheless, he managed to understand his teachers although he was not able to respond to them verbally.

Acquisition of the Second Language

Immediately after we arrived at the States, Dawnis was placed in a preschool at Athens, Georgia. He was 3 years 9 months old at the time and was almost the only non-English speaking child in school. He picked up his second language rapidly through listening and imitation. However, he had great difficulty in expressing and communicating himself though he could follow instructions by observing other children. The new environment and his own language barrier frustrated him; he always complained that he was lonely and without friends. For a short period of time, both parents spoke English to him to enable him to use the language more often.

The first breakthrough in Dawnis's language and personality development occurred when he had his first buddy, Woody. He felt less lonely although his socialization was still limited--he seldom approached his teachers and was nervous to speak in front of his peers. The second breakthrough came when Woody left and Dawnis had another buddy, John David, who was well-liked by other boys and girls in the class. Through interacting with John David and his friends, Dawnis's language abilities blossomed. He expressed himself more readily, began to approach his teachers, and showed readiness for school work. At home, he made many friends with children in the neighborhood. By counting on his buddies, joining a group, and observing other children, Dawnis's social strategies in acquiring a second language were very similar to those described by Wong-Fillmore (1976).

Despite a difficult process, Dawnis, like many other children in his situation, managed to survive a new environment by acquiring the dominant language as quickly as he could. However, this was achieved at the high cost of losing his first language. His exposure to English far exceeded that of Cantonese. His only input of Cantonese was from his parents in the evenings. In contrast, he was exposed to English 8 hours daily in school for instruction and interpersonal communication. When he came home, he watched English TV and listened to English tapes; in the weekends, he played and communicated with the neighborhood children in English. Even bedtime stories were mostly read in English at his requests though they were meant to be read in both languages.

Under such a submersion environment and with a drastic reduction in the use of Cantonese, Dawnis developed an inner speech in the second language: he dreamed and talked to himself in English. In addition, he responded to us in English even though we were speaking Cantonese to him. When he was asked to speak in Cantonese, he simply stuttered and fell back to English. Four months prior to this research, he almost reached a critical stage where he was about to forget his native language.

The Family Education Program

Dawnis had been tutored by me in the three content areas of Chinese, English, and math ever since we arrived in the United

States. However, the lessons were given intermittently when I became too busy with my graduate work. He did not receive any tutoring from January to March, 1987, because of my illness and pressure from school work. It was at this point that Dawnis, at age 5½, showed no inclination toward his native language.

The reintroduction of tutorial lessons started in April, 1987, for a period of 6 months. The observations were divided into two stages: the first stage covered the first three months from April to June, with interim tests to assess the progress; the second stage covered the following three months from July to September, with lessons intensified to a daily basis during the summer vacation.

In the first stage, a total of 7 one-hour tutorials were given to Dawnis in consecutive weekends. He seemed to enjoy them. During this period, not to his awareness, I insisted on using Chinese at home; the only exception was in bedtime stories when he wanted them to be read in English. In the second stage, I used a children's poetry book for the instruction. The book has 22 favorite classical Chinese poems and is richly illustrated in colors. Dawnis was asked to recite some of the poems after studying them.

The lessons reactivated Dawnis's memory of the Chinese words that he had learned previously. He could recognize most of them when he was asked to read the same materials in the second or third time. When he did single-digit addition, he always counted his little fingers in Chinese, indicating that he could think in two languages in some areas. He began to use more Chinese in the last two lessons in June; however, unconsciously, he always resorted to English when asking or responding to a question even though he was learning Chinese. For example, when asking where he should write a Chinese character on the page, he said, "This high?" "This low?" The following is a summary on his use of the two languages during the 6-month period.

English Being the Dominant Language

Vygotsky (1962) suggests that inner speech reflects the ordering of a child's behavior and hence his/her control of the language for conveying the egocentric speech. When Dawnis got up in the morning and looked into the mirror, he said to himself, "My hair looks like a Kingkong." English was also his language of communication with other children. Below was a conversation between Dawnis and Zak, a 6-year old boy who lived next door.

Zak: I got something outside your dad's room.

Dawnis: Where? [He went into his father's bedroom]

My dad's going to be mad at you!

Father: Mʌt si? (What's the matter?)

Dawnis: Kʰuy (He) squirt water hay (at) window wɔ (interjection)!

Gradual Improvement in Cantonese

Although still handicapped by his limited vocabulary, Dawnis showed some signs of improvement in his Cantonese as a result of the tutorial lessons and the parents' effort in using more Chinese at home. He code-switched more often in his speech; occasionally, he was able to express his thoughts entirely in Cantonese without code-switching.

Mom: Süü kow tim kai ho sɪk?
(Ice-cream why delicious?)
Dawnis: Ton.
(Cold.)

Mom: tson yaw nɛ ?
(anything more?)

Dawnis: tʰ im
(Sweet)

He also came to realize that English and Chinese were two different languages after he was being told once. This was demonstrated in his conscious choice of language in the bedtime stories. Once I promised to read in English but then began to narrate in Chinese. He immediately pointed out that I was reading in Chinese. I repeated this several times and was never able to trick him.

Code-Switching

Linguists view code-switching, the alternating use of two languages, as a complex skill indicating a person's intention to be more effective when communicating with a bilingual speaker (Scarcella, p.8).[1] After the reintroduction of the family tutorial program, Dawnis code-switched quite often when he spoke in Chinese. In Dawnis's case, the code-switching indicated that although he was gaining fluency in Cantonese, he did not have enough vocabulary to express himself. Some of the examples are given below.

(a) Tsʰɛɛ ley ŋɔʔ wuy jump away
(Train comes I can jump away.)
[In the context when he was taking a walk with his parents along a railway track.]

(b) Kʌm yʌt ho late wɔ!
(Today very late [interjection])
[Taking a bath rather late in the evening]

(c) Kɔʔ kɔ yɛɛ n soft enough.
(That thing not soft enough.)
[Referring to the mattress of his bed.]

(d) Tʰay to kɔ moon
(Saw the moon)

yii way ground yaw frost
(took it as ground has frost)

kui tʰau mɔŋ to kɔ moon
(raised head saw the moon)

tay tʰau think kʰui live kɔʔ to.
(lowered head think he live there)
[He was explaining the classical Chinese poem, *Tsɪŋ yɛɛ sii*, by Li Po.]

Dawnis's code-switching showed a pattern of conforming to the Cantonese word order; he mainly code-switched to English on content words. Interestingly, he only code-switched when he spoke Cantonese and no single instance of code-switching was found when he spoke in English. There were several Cantonese phrases that he never code-switched because he did not know the English equivalents. They were simple set phrases introduced by me for specific contexts at home. His usage of such phrases was similar to the "one parent, one language" phenomenon illustrated in the Leopold and Ronjat studies.[2] A few examples are given below.

(a) Lɔŋ haw.
(cleaning one's mouth)
[Probably, Dawnis did not have a ready English equivalent.)

(b) Hay pin to ah?
(Where is it?)
[Simple set phrase]

(c) Pa Pa sɪk fan la!
(Papa eat rice [dinner time]!)
[A set phrase introduced by Mom]

(d) Mimi, ŋ ho haam, Ma Ma tsaw ley la!
(Mimi [his sister] don't cry, Mom's coming!)
[A set phrase introduced by Mom]

Linguistic Interference

Although Cantonese and English belong to two different language families, Dawnis's Cantonese showed obvious interference from his dominant language. In the area of phonology, one of his Cantonese diphthongs [ɔy] was influenced by its English counterpart and became more rounded than it should have been. When speaking such words as tɔy (table), hɔy (sea), he pronounced them in a "funny" way because of the extra rounding. In the area of grammar, Dawnis's Cantonese word order, at times, reflected English syntax as shown in the following.

Displacement of locative.

Dawnis: Sɪk hay ney to.
(eat in here)
Correct form: hay ney to sɪk
(in here eat)

Displacement of adverb.

Dawnis: Tim kai n̥ kiu ŋɔ˧ tsow ti kɛ?
(Why not call me earlier)
Correct form: Tim kai n̥ tsow ti kiu ŋɔ˧?
(Why not earlier call me?)

[Here, the displacement resulted in a different meaning than the one intended by the speaker. It meant "why didn't you ask me to come earlier?" and not "why didn't you call me earlier?" as intended by Dawnis.]

Transposition of Wh question.

Dawnis: Key tɔɔ kɛɛŋ ŋɔ˧ tey yaw?
(How many mirrors we have?)
Correct form: ŋɔ˧ tey yaw key tɔɔ fay [omitted classifier] kɛɛŋ?
(We have how many mirrors?)

Displacement of indirect object.

Dawnis: Pey ŋɔ˧ kɔ wuu yi pʰak.
(Give me a fly swatter.)
Correct form: Pey kɔ wuu yi pʰak ŋɔ˧
(Give a fly swatter me.)

Displacement of negative.

Dawnis: Cʰaa mow yɛɛ.
(Put on no-thing.)
[He needed to put some lotion on his skin.]
Correct form: N̥ cʰaa yɛɛ.
(Not put on anything.)

[He should have placed the verb negation "n̥" in front of the verb "cʰaa" instead of negating the noun "yɛɛ" with "mow."]

A Second Example

Dawnis: ŋɔ˧ cii key n̥ cuk to wɔ!
(I myself not catch [it]!)
Correct form: ŋɔ˧ cii key cuk n̥ to wɔ!
(I myself catch not [it]!)

[Dawnis' sentence corresponded to the English syntax "I myself cannot catch it." The Cantonese syntax requires the negation to be inserted between the verb "cuk" and its particle "to."]

The use of double negative.

Dawnis: ŋɔ˧ tʰɛŋ n̥ to mow yɛɛ.
(I hear not nothing.)
Correct form: ŋɔ˧ tʰɛŋ n̥ to.
(I hear not.)

[Dawnis liked to use double negatives in English, such as "I don't want nothing," "I can't hear nothing." Such an idiosyncrasy was transferred to his Cantonese.]

It was clear from the translations of the utterances that many of the errors were manifestations of the dominance of the second language grammar. The phenomenon seemed to correspond to the second stage of Volterra and Taeschner's "three-stage model" when a child has acquired two lexicons but one grammar in the process of learning two languages.[3] Although the Volterra and Taeschner model was based on data from two bilingual children who acquired their languages simultaneously (acquiring two languages at the same time since birth), it also seemed to apply to successive acquisition (acquiring one language after the other), as is in Dawnis's case. However, it should be noted this stage is only transitional. As suggested in the model, a bilingual child will ultimately reach a third stage with two lexicons and two syntactic systems. At this stage, although Dawnis's Cantonese syntax showed strong influence from his English grammar, there was one occasion on which he showed a correct use of negation.

ŋɔʔ watch m̩ to TV.
(I watch not TV.)

[He code-switched watch for the Cantonese verb, tʰay, but he put the negation correctly between the verb and its particle, to.]

Rudimentary Use of Chinese Classifiers

Dawnis used kɔ for every kind of noun. For instance, saam kɔ yüü (three fish; the correct form: saam tiw yüü), saam kɔ tsii (three pieces of paper; the correct form: saam tsön tsii), ŋɔʔkɔ hay (my shoe, the correct form: ŋɔʔ tsɛʔ hay).

Because of the limited input of the correct forms, Dawnis developed a simplification system, using kɔ for every noun. Such a phenomenon, however, is not uncommon for children of Dawnis's age even in a monolingual environment back in Hong Kong. Usually, those children will develop a more sophisticated knowledge of their use of the classifiers as they grow older.

Partial Pragmatic Competence

Although Dawnis was able to communicate in simple Cantonese, he failed to pick up nuances in the utterances. On one occasion, when he translated my question for his friend, he took the literal meaning and missed the message entirely.

Mom: Kʰui cow mʌt?
(He does what?)
[I was asking Dawnis the intention of his friend when he knocked on the door. The question meant "what does he want?"]

Friend: What did your mother say?

Dawnis: She said "What are you doing?"

Compound Bilingual

The phenomenon of having one conceptual system and two sets of linguistic signs became more prominent after Dawnis began kindergarten in August. During that time; except for simple utterances and set phrases, he usually expressed himself in English. When he was asked to repeat the utterance in Cantonese, it was obvious that he simply translated the English words into Chinese, as shown below.

Dawnis: I want to glue this in my pumpkin and then cut that thing.

Mom: Coŋ mʌn tim kɔŋ ?
(How would you say it in Chinese?)

Dawnis: ŋɔ̀ sön glue ney kɔ in my pumpkin and cut kɔ̀ kɔ thing.
(I want glue this in my pumpkin and cut that thing.)

A Second Example

Dawnis: Is this your last one?
[Referring to the pork chop I was preparing on the counter]

Dawnis: Hay n̥ hay last kɔ ?
(Is [it] not last one?)
[When asked to repeat his question in Cantonese]

It was obvious that his Cantonese utterances were word for word translations from English in both of the examples above. At this stage, Dawnis used the dominant language as a source for eliciting Chinese, the weaker linguistic system.

Two Personalities

In the first stage of the observation, Dawnis displayed two personalities when speaking different languages. When he was speaking English with his father (who spoke with him in the second language occasionally), he was independent and carefree. However, when he switched to Cantonese, his voice became softer, giving the impression of a shy, timid child. Such a tendency was especially prominent when he spoke to Mom. It was possible that because English was the social language for interacting with teachers and friends at school, characteristics of assertiveness were carried over even when he used it at home. In contrast, Cantonese was always the intimate language that he spoke with his parents, who are as much a symbol of authority as solace. Such a split of personality, however, was not significant in the second stage of the observation.

Testing

Four tests were given to Dawnis in June and October respectively to assess his progress in both the first and second observation periods. The tests assessed his story telling ability, active and receptive vocabulary, and communicative competence.

Results of the first set of tests showed that Dawnis was proficient in telling a story in English, but he had great difficulty in telling it in Cantonese. The English version was longer with no code-switching, fillers, or pauses; the Cantonese version, however, was replete with those features even though it was just half as long. In spite of that, he did well in the other three tests. On the Peabody Vocabulary Test (PPVT) on passive vocabulary, he scored "high average" for both languages.[4] On the active vocabulary test requiring him to name items in the house in English and Cantonese, he demonstrated a balanced command of the lexicons of both languages. For the test on communicative competence, he was able to respond to simple situations in both languages. Despite Dawnis's apparent difficulty in using large chunks of Cantonese as indicated in the storytelling test, he made significant improvements in his first language as suggested by the other test results.

Surprisingly, he did not show continuous improvement in his Cantonese as expected when he was tested again in October. He scored roughly at the same level for the PPVT and the test on communicative competence, but he receded a great deal on story telling and the active vocabulary test. Towards the last one third of the test on story telling, he retreated entirely to English. When he was asked to name items in the house in both languages, his Chinese list was much shorter. The tests for both phases are described as below.

Story Telling

Dawnis chose to retell *Goldilocks*, which was one of his favorite books. He heard the story numerous times when he was younger, but it had not been read to him for months before the tests in June and October. Test results are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1

Retelling *Goldilocks* in English

Date	Time(min.)	No. of Words	Filler	Pause	Code-Switching
June	5	238	0	0	0
October	4	278	0	3	0

Table 2

Retelling *Goldilocks* in Cantonese

Date	Time (min.)	No. of Words	Filler	Pause	Code-Switching	Sentence-Switch
June	5	142	8	0	9	0
October	4½	86	1	6	15	11

Test on Active Vocabulary

In this test, Dawnis was given a certain amount of time to name items in the house in both languages. According to Saunders, the degree of bilingualism can be measured by the following formula:[5]

$$\left\{\frac{\text{No. of L2 (English) words} - \text{No. of L1 (Cantonese) words}}{\text{Larger of the above two}} + 1\right\} \div 2$$

Legend: L1= First language; L2= Second language

Results are given on a scale from 0 to 1, with 0.50 indicating a "balanced control" of the two languages. A result of 0 indicates no response at all in the second language, whereas 1 shows that all responses are in the second language. Dawnis's first test showed he had a balanced control of the two languages; the second one, however, indicated that he was strong in English but weak in Cantonese as shown in table 3.

Table 3

Active Vocabulary Tests in English and Cantonese

Date	Time (Min.)	No. of Words in English	No. of Words in Cantonese	Degree of Bilingualism
June	1½	12	10	0.58
October	1½	12	7	0.71

Tests on Passive Vocabulary

Dawnis took the L Form of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and a Cantonese translated version of the same form in June. The Chinese test, however, was not considered entirely valid because it was given shortly after he took the English version. In October, he took the translated version of the M Form

(a parallel for the L Form) for testing his Cantonese and took the L Form again for English. He scored "high average" on all four tests, indicting that he had a good receptive ability in both languages though he was weak at speaking his first language as suggested in the October active vocabulary test.

Table 4

PPVT Test Results

	Basal	Ceiling	No. of Errors	Standard Score
June				
English	30	74	11	102
Chinese	30	93	14	118
October				
English	38	83	11	104
Chinese	38	95	19	108

Tests on Communicative Competence

Dawnis was asked how he would express himself in both languages in four simple situations. His responses showed that he knew how to communicate himself in both languages in those situations. There was no significant difference between the responses in the first and second tests. The questions and responses are given as follows.

(a) Question: What would you say if you want to eat something?
Dawnis: Can I have some ice-cream?
ㄋㄛˇ sön yiew süü kow.
(I want ice-cream.)

(b) Question: What would you say if you want to play with the toys of the other children?
Dawnis: Can I play with your new toy?
ㄋㄛˇ sön waan ney kㄛ wun kuy.
(I want [to] play [with] your toy.)

[Usually, the request should be followed by a question tag, "t k n t k ah?" which means "Is it alright?"]

(c) Question: What do you say if you want to go to the bathroom?
Dawnis: Can I go to the bathroom?
ㄋㄛˇ sön ㄅㄛ sii.
(I want [to] boo-boo.)

[This is a colloquial expression, and Dawnis was reminded that he should have said "H n h yi huy c ii s ?" which means "Can I go to the bathroom?"]

(d) Question: How would you say greetings in the morning, at night, and meal times?

Dawnis: Good morning.
Tsow sʌn.
(Good morning)

Good night.
Fʌn kaw.
(sleep)
[Colloquial. A more elegant expression should be "Maan on" which means "Good night."]

It's time to eat.
Sɪk yɛɛ la!
(Time to eat.)

Concluding Remarks

With the family education program and the parents' emphasis on using the native language at home, Dawnis showed a steady improvement in his first language, Cantonese, during the first few months of the observation. This was indicated by his tendency to code-switch and his more frequent use of Cantonese during summer when he did not have to go to school, the major second language environment.

A drastic change occurred when he started kindergarten at the end of August. He no longer code-switched; instead, he spoke entirely in English when conversing with the parents, who consistently asked him to use Cantonese. There were frustrations on both sides; it seemed that the family program had failed. Careful observations, however, revealed that Dawnis still had a good receptive ability in the first language as indicated by his second PPVT test and his ability in translating English utterances into Cantonese even though an English syntax was used. His retreat to English on everyday speech and his test results on story telling and active vocabulary suggested that he needed more help and practice in "speaking" Cantonese.

A visit to his school and a reassessment of his social and intellectual developments helped us understand why he receded to English. Every day, he was in an environment where the second language was the means for socialization and survival. His alliance with English became critical as he began to learn how to read and write in school.

To a certain extent, meanwhile, reactivating and reusing the native language was comparable to learning a new language for Dawnis. It is well documented that one can comprehend more than produce the new language in the learning process (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The family program and the use of home language are the basis for maintaining the native language. However, more support is needed for a child staying in a second language submersion environment. Verhoeven and Boeschoten (1986) found that Turkish children living in the Netherlands had difficulty in using their first language even though they received primary

language instruction in school for 4 hours a week. Given Dawnis's situation, therefore, it may be unrealistic to expect him to be any more proficient than he was in his first language. If he had had constant contacts with a community (playmates and relatives) speaking his native language, it would have helped him to maintain his first language better.

The case of Dawnis reveals that parents have to be patient, persistent, and good humored in helping their children to keep their first language. Although he was bored and frustrated at first when asked to repeat his English utterances in Cantonese, he later became used to the practice and knew that he was expected to do it. The task is undoubtedly difficult and tedious, but parents need to help their children maintain their native language and culture as they may lose them rapidly in a foreign environment.

After the research, Dawnis started going to Chinese school for 2 hours every weekend until now although I fail to find time to tutor him regularly. The family had moved several times because of job relocation. There was one year that he did not attend Chinese school because the service was not available in the local area. Although going to Chinese classes should help the child keep his/her language, its effect would be limited if parents do not take initiatives in strengthening the interest in the language. Dawnis, now 13, is in the 7th grade. He is a bright student, scoring above the 90th percentile in reading and math in his recent Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. He is fortunate in that he did not suffer tremendously from his stunted first language development in school work. Nonetheless, he would have benefited much more had he learned his language and culture better.

Now in his teens, Dawnis does not speak Cantonese but has an excellent receptive ability in understanding the language. He can also read a simple text fairly fluently with some help. Although he does not particularly like Chinese School, the family's anticipated visit to Hong Kong and China in summer has provided him with a strong incentive to brush up his Cantonese.

Notes

[1] Scarcella reported the comments by Valdes-Fallis G. (1981). Code Switching and the classroom teachers. *Language in Education: Theory and Practice*, 4(16), Washington, DC.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

[2] The Leopold and Ronjat studies were reported in *Life with two languages*, p. 173 and 180. Leopold (German), whose wife speaks English, and Ronjat (French), whose wife speaks German, raised their children as bilinguals by having each of the parents interact with the children in his/her own language. They found the strategy helped their children successfully acquire their parents' languages despite an initial period of confusion in their language development. Dawnis's use of set Cantonese phrases was analogous to the phenomenon of using a specific language for a specific setting.

[3] The study was quoted in *Life with two languages*, p. 183.

[4] Though the first PPVT test on Cantonese was not considered perfectly valid because it was given shortly after the English test, the subsequent test showed consistent results that Dawnis had a good receptive ability in Chinese.

[5] *Bilingual children: Guidance for the family*, p. 207.

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